

Sketch

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Ascension

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ascension

by
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*and he look out over the world and see the works of their
hands and investments upon it and he growl to himself . . .
people can fuck up a free lunch*

—fragment from the epic of piglover

1

sunbathed in golden honey and slow gentle light touches
her neck and she takes up the chalice her daily communion
and sunpools golden stream swirling about her white clean
feet standing unbound on golden floor and she pauses a
time in thought of him and wonder if his journey ever ended
and did he find that grace he sought
she remembers

2

rising out of desert world bleak forsaken land of hot hot sun
and gravelsand desert for miles and desert to the sky
parched dead sand under desert sky we rose out of that
world together thundering roaring with the wind rocking
wildly in speedwhipped wind of flight chackety chackety
chackety he stood with his back to me as he faced out on the
sunblast world falling away. sun streaked with wind
rumpled through his long golden hair and whorled its gold
around his head and billowed his white tunic i closed my
eyes in gentle weariness as he piglover spoke ya hey what a
mindblower pissing out of a boxcar at 80 miles an hour

i met him in whitefish head of montana cherry country and
he piglover came into whitefish disguised as small old
woman with an ailment and contemplating ten major
operations trying to convert everyone at once no good
condemn god damn bus down to lewiston coldest place in
contiguous u.s. he destitute in whitefish playing guitar in

bars singing own crazy songs won't take money they pass
 hat he give back. i catch him in longhorn ask him you're
 very good why don't you take their lucre and he answer
 quiet gentle smile i'm no ordinary man you know tell me
 your name my little piglet i told him i was mara and within
 the week panting and wet in hot sweet night i was his mara

4

we lived like spring of summerwind above orchards in
 fruitpicker's abandoned shack standing uphill behind the
 freightyards we candlelight and sing and quit playing bars
 more than one two nights a week we sing and laugh and
 play have fine old time all around up our hill he spend days
 loading scrap metal on gondolas one fifty an hour

5

he crazy god damn piglover take me running in the mor-
 nings run all through the hills in muddy boots he run
 through swamps and rivers over hills through forest he
 breathe sunrise mist kick rocks through holes in the sky i
 quit smoke and drinking keep up with god damned piglover
 feels good.

6

piglover you fool you could be rich we could sing like this
 in bars until buy a greyhound bus private and go to seattle
 sing for the boeing people retire rich have ease and comfort
 get nice house on puget sound.

7

huy huy mara retire in ease going to rot sit around thinking
 maybe i make up song now no maybe i do it later get fat in
 my head waiting for later. nothing grow on money and ease
 except middleroad america all that advertising a m radio
 colorkeyed interiors other junkfood. no good mix lifesong
 with too much storebought ease. lifesongs by themselves
 they come out of sitting on fence watching little fats-piggies
 play bumperpigs step in patient pigmothers eye bounce on
 her belly. it's grocery store life-of-packaged-ease mothers

bark snap at their children whining in grocery store carts in
 supermarket air got poison a m radio residue. songs come
 maybe standing on top burlington northern gondola lifting
 piece of somebody's dismembered stove over side sunshine
 and larchtrees all around got no canned music people got to
 make their own

*hey kitchen stove
 someone else's fire
 cold in your belly
 i make it hot for you now
 no more taffy sowbelly angelcake for you
 send you to scrappers maybe
 make you pontiac
 some man pineappleshirt
 he stuff you five kids and prune face wife
 stuff pontiac circus
 maybe take dog too
 go to glacier park look at
 wild
 in care of park service
 welcome to great american outdoors kitchen stove
 it better for you when you red dust in mesabi range
 open earth forestmine
 mine for mushrooms under feet of happy piglets*

8

god damn he crazy that piglover that night we sing and
 smash our cooking pans and break a shovel playing
 drumbeat on them he pure rhythm flatten thirty gallon oil
 drum into nothing smile shadow eyes happy at sunrise say
 who need philosophy books got drumbeat

9

whitefish freightyards small place got sea .of discard
 railroad brakeshoes lot of mountain here to coast gnaw train
 brakes to bone. piglover hang train brakes around his neck
 string them on leather thong i ask how hell i going to kiss a
 man got his head in an iron pile he say never mind that he

say just think they wind chimes pretend they gentle
southern moon breezes whisper around my ears and hair
honeysuckle lips run dew moist against ear mouth cheek
warm tongue full shirt rusing higher forgotten and that yes
that deep oh yes sweet surprise

10

i go down with piglover to the tracks and we pitch junk till
we laugh and see our road winding narrow and steel rails
and tree lined no signs no neon no advertising no funny
little peoplecars. green thin corridor slipping place to place
slipping into america through back doors and that night
walk over sea of discard railroad brakeshoes and find our
box car fly west toward the coast sing on box car gypsum
dust rise from floor dirtier than hell under a rug. we choke
quit singing piglover shout huy huy huy we stop in spokane
fly out jump another car cleaner chase out into desert
nowhere central washington long time hot in car look at
desert nowhere say god damn yakima valley owe its ass to
irrigation go slow through small desert town little desert
boys throw rocks at box cars got their doors open thinking
maybe someone inside hit piglover in ribs he jump up shout
huy and laugh all way to wenatchee he think life fine joke on
everybody

11

in wenatchee get three more diesels got seven now take us
out of the desert over mountains higher higher go in
cascade tunnel dark black smoky in there can't see damn
thing blast of cold air every few minutes from vent in side of
tunnel eight miles long we in there twenty-two minutes
choke and roll around on floor i can't see piglover in dark
and dieselsmoke but he say look around careful we
following path of men who move mountains american way
men afraid of rockfalls and premature blasts move
mountains for daily wage and bowl of stew he say. finally
come out daylight and now u.s. 2 below us on left was on
right when we go in tunnel cars full of pineapple shirts all
down there all going to glacier we coming down now brake

shoes screeching glow bright red send sparks all over
speeding cinders long way down finally hit pacific at ed-
mond train follow shoreline careful winding down to seattle
we jump off sleep in park next night play two three bars go
out to beach going to sleep on the sand cook potatoes and
fresh clams slow under coals.

12

ya hey ya hey i feel good going back to iowa raise fats-
piggies start soccer team take on local softball goofs ya hey
you come too wife-mother in lodge of piglover

how will you get rich piglover

got my time all my own ya hey how rich can you get sit on
fence watch fats-piggies write crazy stories sing crazy songs
play crazy games all people we choose around us we free to
come and go crazy as we please

i look down at sand sad time

all got to choose what we gonna have but where we are and
what we got not as strong as who we with. takes lot of time
learn to love mara you follow beauty long enough to get
somewhere going to lead you through some pain and
struggle. got to struggle through pain like run through
swamps and rivers. think happy ya hey got river muck up to
your knees think it all the shit in life stamp tramp it down
run on through. good marriage not like america national
sport where three-fourths time you stand around wait for
something to happen. work hard to try stand in right place
think maybe nice fat fly ball come to you. more like soccer.
good fight for everybody all the time. got to try your powers
all the time with each other find out how strong you are
together. no dead people can hide on soccer field you got to
show your stuff all the time get better and stronger and
quicker. got to have lots of strength and keep it alive to
stamp tramp all the river muck we got in our lives in this
country.

no piglover i think i stay in seattle while longer
piglover he don't say more we quiet gentle sleep long time
warm cheeks touching when i wake up he gone and sunrise
coming over city horizon jagged wound between heaven and

earth and somebody's piece of dismembered sun hanging
there crimson light seeping skyward. i get up go toward city
don't hear of piglover anymore except once somebody see
him down san clemente tearing apart old building looking
for chinese fortune brick crazy god damned piglover
laughing and counting his powers.

1

late morning light oozing slowly sluggish through ther-
mopane windows and she stand still on gold tile floor and
wife of aerospace engineer and looks out across city-fouled
water in puget sound and like to jump up and kick old
memories in the ass lifts small glass chalice to her lips
listerine yellow like stale hog piss in the subdivided urban
sun.